

Central Valley Bird Highlights: March through May 2004

John Sterling, 26 Palm Ave, Woodland, CA 95965

WATERBIRDS

A singing **Black Rail** * at Consumnes Preserve on 24 April (JT) was one of few records for Sacramento County. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the South Wilbur Flood Area, a **Ruddy Turnstone** and a breeding plumaged male **Ruff** at the Kent Avenue Ponds, a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and a **Franklin's Gull** on 2 May (GH, RH, JSe, LC) were the highlights for a record-breaking Big Day of 145 species in Kings County. **Solitary Sandpipers** at the Colusa NWR on 18 April (2 individuals) (JL) and 1 May, (CM) in Colusa County, another at Mendota Wildlife Area on 17 April (BB) in Fresno County, and another near Vacaville on 19 April (RM) in Solano County. Two **Red Knots** were at the Kent Avenue ponds on 8 & 9 May (GL, JSL) in Kings County where somewhat regular in spring, along with a **Baird's Sandpiper** on 8 May (GL) that is considerably rarer during spring migration than fall west of the Sierra Nevada/Cascade divide. Another **Baird's** was at the Redding Sewage Ponds on 10 April (RM) in Shasta County, and these ponds continued to harbor rarities with six locally-rare **Willetts** and up to 4 **Solitary Sandpipers** on 20 April (RM, BD) and a **Red Knot** on 20 April (BD) that was first found at Kutras Lake in Redding on 19 April with two locally-rare **Marbled Godwits** (RS) and two **Willetts** on 20 April (RB). Three **Stilt Sandpipers** at the Fresno Sewage Ponds on 8 May (GL) was probably a high county for Fresno County of this scarce migrant/wintering species. A **Franklin's Gull** at Bravo Lake on 2 May (GH) was a first for Tulare County.

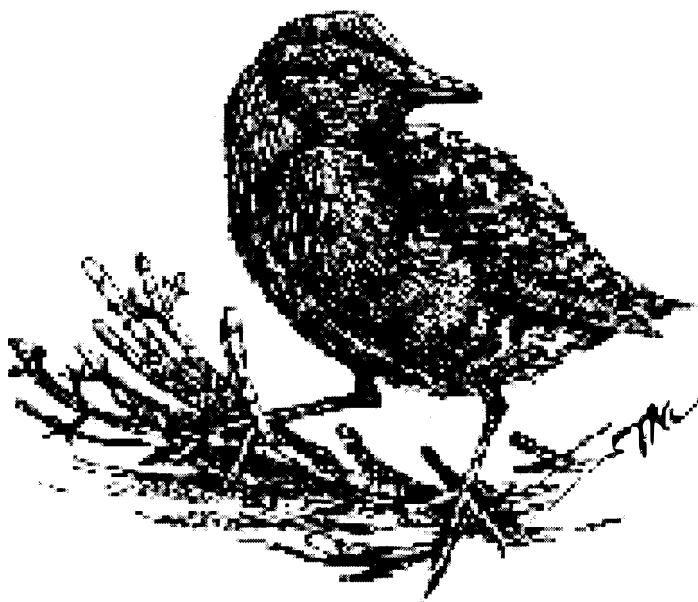
LANDBIRDS

A pair of nesting **Swainson's Hawks** along the American River Parkway found on 5 April (EH) was perhaps the first nesting at that location in Sacramento County (at least in recent decades since urbanization). A **Steller's Jay** at Lodi from 21-29 May (BM) was unusual in the lowlands this late in the spring and a rare find in San Joaquin County. A singing **Red-eyed Vireo** * in north Davis on 28 May (SH) was an excellent find that was seen by many for the first Yolo County record. A singing **Northern Parula** * at the Consumnes Preserve on 9 May (CC) and another at the Bufferlands on 23 May (CC) in Sacramento County were the only vagrant warblers reported this spring from the Central Valley. A singing **Grasshopper Sparrow** along Peterson Road near Sites in western Colusa County on 10 May (JLx) was one of few county records of a species that is easily overlooked. A male **Great-tailed Grackle** at the Valley West shopping center in Calaveras County on 10 April (CM) was the second record for that location and the third record for the county. Another in Yuba County in April (BW) was an apparent first

county record. A pair of **Great-tailed Grackles** near Fairfield were discovered nesting in mid-May (JW) for the first breeding record for Solano County. A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** along Hwy 12 just inside the Calaveras County line near Camanche Dam on 8 & 9 April (KF) was perhaps only the third county record.

* Pending endorsement by the Sacramento Bird Records Committee

Observers: Bev Brock, Ray Bruun, Luke Cole, Chris Conard, Bruce Deuel, Kasey Foley, Rob Hansen, Ed Harper, Gjon Hazard, Gary Linqest, Jim Lomax (JLx), John S. Luther, Curt Medlock (CMe), Bonnie Meyer, Red Modeen, Clyde Morris, Roger Muscat, Rob Santry, Jeff Seay, John Trochet and Jim Walsh, Brian Williams.



Black Rail

sketch by Tim Manolis